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Critical and Exegetical Notes.

Errors in the Bible.

Are there errors in the history, geography and chronology of the Bible? That there are is not only the claim of rationalistic critics, but even the admission of certain evangelical scholars. On the other hand the great mass of the evangelical teachers and preachers in this country are not willing to admit this. They stoutly maintain that the Scriptures, at least in their original copies, were errorless. This view is held with great tenacity because it is said, and that truly with great force, "That the primary and secondary matter in Scripture, such as doctrine and history, are so indissolubly connected with each other, that uncertainty in respect to the latter, casts uncertainty upon the former. If for example, the history of the residence of the Israelites in Egypt and of their exodus and wanderings, is mythical and exaggerated like the early history of Assyria and Babylon, this throws discredit upon the decalogue as having been received from the lips of God on Sinai. If the history, geography and chronology in the midst of which the doctrinal elements of the Pentateuch are embedded, contain fictions and contradictions, these doctrinal elements will not be accepted as an infallible revelation from God." Thus also is it said to be with the entire Bible; and if you begin to admit errors of statement of facts where are you going to stop? will you not land at last like Robert Elsmere by the side of the grave of a *dead* Lord? Such, indeed, is the tendency of admitting errors, although we by no means believe it to be the inevitable conclusion of that position. Then, moreover, it is asked, where are the alleged errors which cannot reasonably be explained as those of copyists, or arising from a wrong translation or interpretation, or from our ignorance of all attending circumstances, or, like many of those previously alleged, may not be proved by further discovery and research to have been wrongly so called? This indeed is the important question. What are the facts? By the facts the evangelical doubters are willing to abide. If, however, these errors exist, they should be able to be stated with such force and clearness as to obtain the verdict of the intelligent evangelical Bible students of this country in their favor. It will not do to allege errors in a general way or to appeal to the authority of German scholars in their behalf; if they really exist they should be able to be definitely and exactly pointed out. If the Bible, also, is like other ancient writings in respect to its history, chronology and geography, and the errors in these particulars have only been explained away by unscientific reasoning, as some hold, then let this same unscientific reasoning be applied to the writings of a Homer or a Livy or some other ancient writer, and thus let such writings be proved equally errorless with the Bible, or any particular book of the Bible, in historic statements.

Unless some such work is done as it has not yet been, those of our evangelical teachers and preachers who regard the original documents of the Bible errorless cannot be expected to change their views or countenance those whose first assumption is that the Bible is not infallible in its statements of history, geography or chronology.

C. L. E.

Numbers 20: 7—12.

Three things are here to be noted.

First: What was Moses commanded to do?